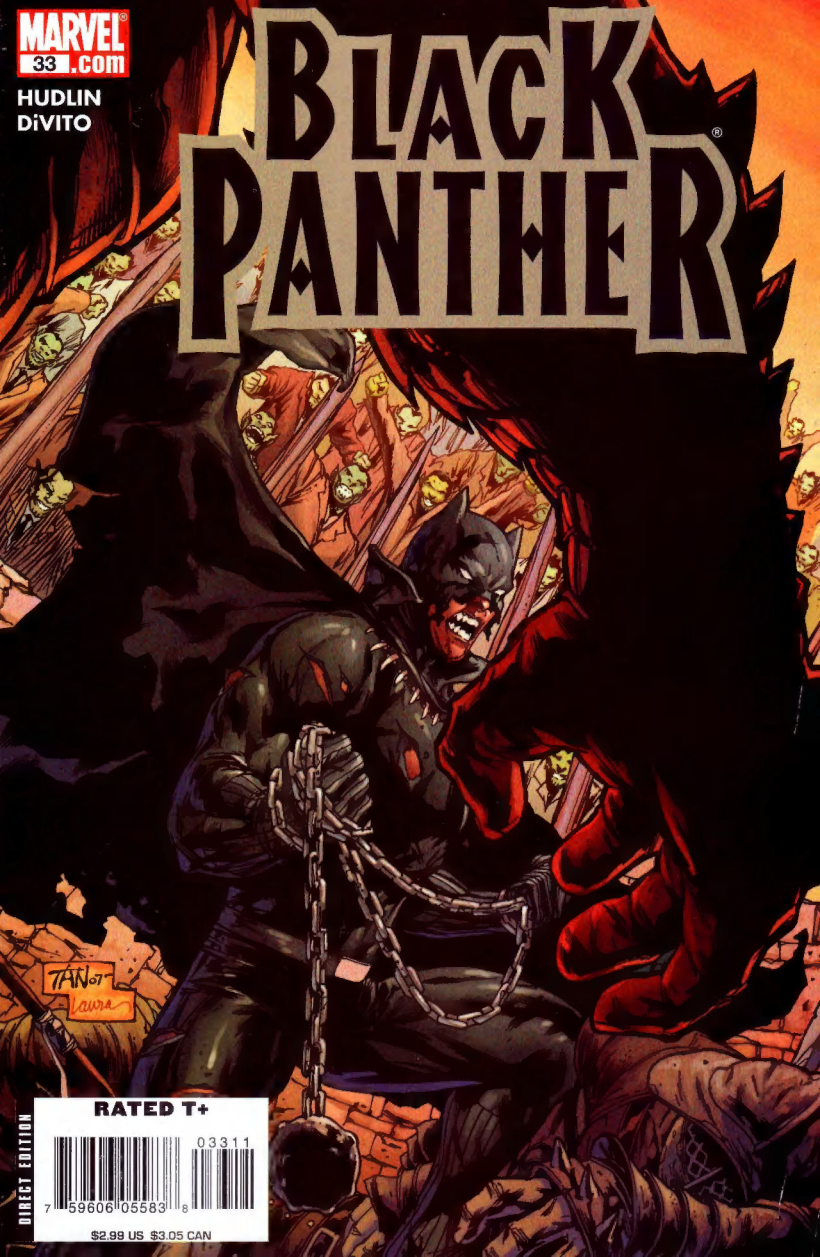
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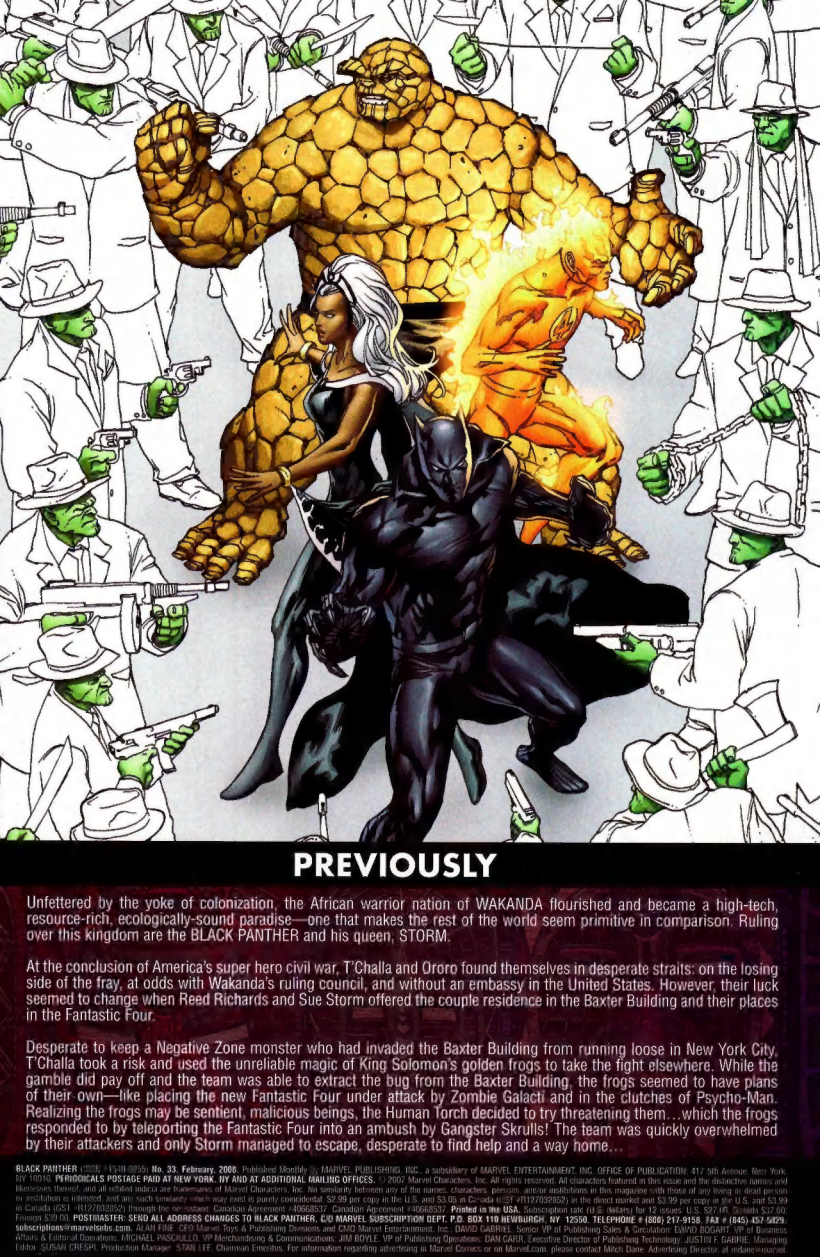

PREVIOUSLY

Unfettered by the yoke of colonization, the African warrior nation of WAKANDA flourished and became a high-tech, resource-rich, ecologically-sound paradise—one that makes the rest of the world seem primitive in comparison. Ruling over this kingdom are the BLACK PANTHER and his queen, STORM.

At the conclusion of America's super hero civil war, T'Challa and Ororo found themselves in desperate straits: on the losing side of the fray, at odds with Wakanda's ruling council, and without an embassy in the United States. However, their luck seemed to change when Reed Richards and Sue Storm offered the couple residence in the Baxter Building and their places in the Fantastic Four.

Desperate to keep a Negative Zone monster who had invaded the Baxter Building from running loose in New York City, T'Challa took a risk and used the unreliable magic of King Solomon's golden frogs to take the fight elsewhere. While the gamble did pay off and the team was able to extract the bug from the Baxter Building, the frogs seemed to have plans of their own—like placing the new Fantastic Four under attack by Zombie Galacti and in the clutches of Psycho-Man. Realizing the frogs may be sentient, malicious beings, the Human Torch decided to try threatening them…which the frogs responded to by teleporting the Fantastic Four into an ambush by Gangster Skrulls! The team was quickly overwhelmed by their attackers and only Storm managed to escape, desperate to find help and a way home…

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READY TO DIE
PART 3 OF 4
REGINALD HUDLIN WRITER
ANDREA DIVITO PENCILS & INKS
VAL STAPLES COLORS
VC'S CORY PETIT LETTERS
BILLY TAN & LAURA MARTIN COVER
DANIEL KETCHUM ASSISTANT EDITOR
AXEL ALONSO EDITOR
JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER
BLOW THAT BROAD OUTTA THE SKY!

MAN, SHE'S FAST!
KEEP THIS JALOPY STEADY SO I CAN GET A GOOD SHOT OFF!
I-I-I CAN'T! THE WIND CURRENTS ARE TOO CRAZY. NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT!
SEE? NOW THE RAIN...IF THIS DAME AIN'T AN ELEMENTAL, I'LL EAT MY HAT!
IF WE DON'T BAG THIS BROAD, YOU'LL BE EATIN' WORSE THAN YOUR HAT!
GETTING DICEY.
WHADDYA MEAN?
WE'RE ABOUT TO ENTER HOSTILE TERRITORY.

125TH ST.
DOES THIS WORLD EVEN HAVE A REPLICA OF MY FATHER'S HOMELAND?
IF WE CROSS THIS BLOCK, WE'RE VIOLATING THE TREATY.
SCREW THAT! BIGGIE SAYS DO SOMETHING, WE DO IT--NO EXCUSES.
OKAY, IT'S YOUR FUNERAL... AND MINE.
RIGHT ON, SOUL SISTER. WE GOT YOUR BACK!
NO, WAIT! THEY ARE TOO DANGEROUS! TOO HEAVILY ARMED!
THEY AIN'T THE ONLY ONES!

WHAM
HA HA! WELCOME TO HARLEM, BABY!
HOLY! A FORCE-FIELD OR SOMETHIN'! WHADDAYA WANT ME TO DO, GUYS?
I'LL BE DAMNED IF I DIE ON 125TH STREET. THAT'S FOR SURE. LET'S REPORT BACK TO THE BOSS. SOMEBODY'S GOTTA FIND OUT WHO'S PROVIDING THAT KINDA TECHNOLOGY UPTOWN.
THASS RIGHT! GO HOME! THESE ARE OUR STREETS!
Uncle Ben's Food Store
WELCOME HOME, SISTA.
BUT I'M NOT FROM HERE.
THIS IS UPTOWN, BABY. IT'S NOT WHERE YOU'RE FROM, IT'S WHERE YOU'RE AT.

MEANWHILE...
I COULD HAVE YOU KILLED.
BUT I'M A BUSINESSMAN.
YOU DIE IN THE ARENA, I MAKE MONEY ON IT. PLUS, IT SENDS A MESSAGE TO YOUR BUDDIES UPTOWN.
NICE OF THEM TO DRESS YOU UP AS SOME KINDA SYMBOL OF THEIR MOVEMENT THAT WAY. THEY'LL GET THE MESSAGE LOUD AND CLEAR WHEN YOU GET TORN INTO BITE-SIZED CHUNKS ON THE ARENA FLOOR.
HOW'D THEY PICK YOU? YOU THE TOUGHEST GUY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD? OR DID YOU JUST PULL THE SHORTEST STICK?
WE COULD CUT A DEAL. PUT SOME OTHER DUMB SUCKER IN THE SUIT AND THEY GET TORE APART IN THE ARENA AND YOU LIVE A NICE, QUIET LIFE.
BUT YOU GOTTA TELL ME SOMETHING:
WHO IS THE LEADER OF THE BLACK PANTHERS? WHERE IS HE? WHO IS YOUR INSIDE MAN IN MY ORGANIZATION?
HOW'S YOUR THROAT?
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU DIE!

WHERE DID YOU SAY YOU WERE FROM AGAIN?
KENYA, BUT MY FATHER IS FROM HARLEM.
WELL, WELCOME HOME, SISTA--*FOR REAL!*
YOU STILL GOT PEOPLE HERE?
I DON'T KNOW.
WELL, YOU NEED TO TALK WITH THIS MAN.
THIS MAN IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LEADERS WE GOT UP HERE. YO, REV...MEET... AH...
ORORO MUNROE.
GREAT TO MEET YOU. JUST CALL ME MARTIN.
YEAH. THE REV' HAS THAT EFFECT ON PEOPLE.

AND NOW... THE FLYING COMPETITION!
SHOWTIME, FLYBOY!
WAKE UP.
WAIMMMMM... CAN'T... BREATHE...
WHAT IS THIS STUFF MADE OF? UNSTABLE MOLECULES? WHERE'S REED WHEN YOU NEED HIM--
ALL YOU NEED, VICTIM...

...IS TO PRAY TO YOUR MAKER FOR A QUICK DEATH.
IF I HAD A DOLLAR FOR EVERY TIME I WAS TOLD THAT...
WHOA, YOU ARE FAST...AND I WAS HOPING THOSE SPIKES WOULD CUT THROUGH THE BUBBLE, BUT NO SUCH LUCK.

I'M TRYING TO AVOID DOING ANYTHING HAND-TO-HAND WITH YOU, BUDDY.
IF YOU CAN'T SEE WHERE TO HIT...
AND I BURN UP THE OXYGEN IN HERE...AND I'D BET YOU NEED AIR AS MUCH AS ME...
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS? HE'S GONNA BLIND EVERYBODY IN THE JOINT!
YOUR SUNGLASSES, SIR.
LOOKS LIKE...I OUTLASTED YOU... POKEY...

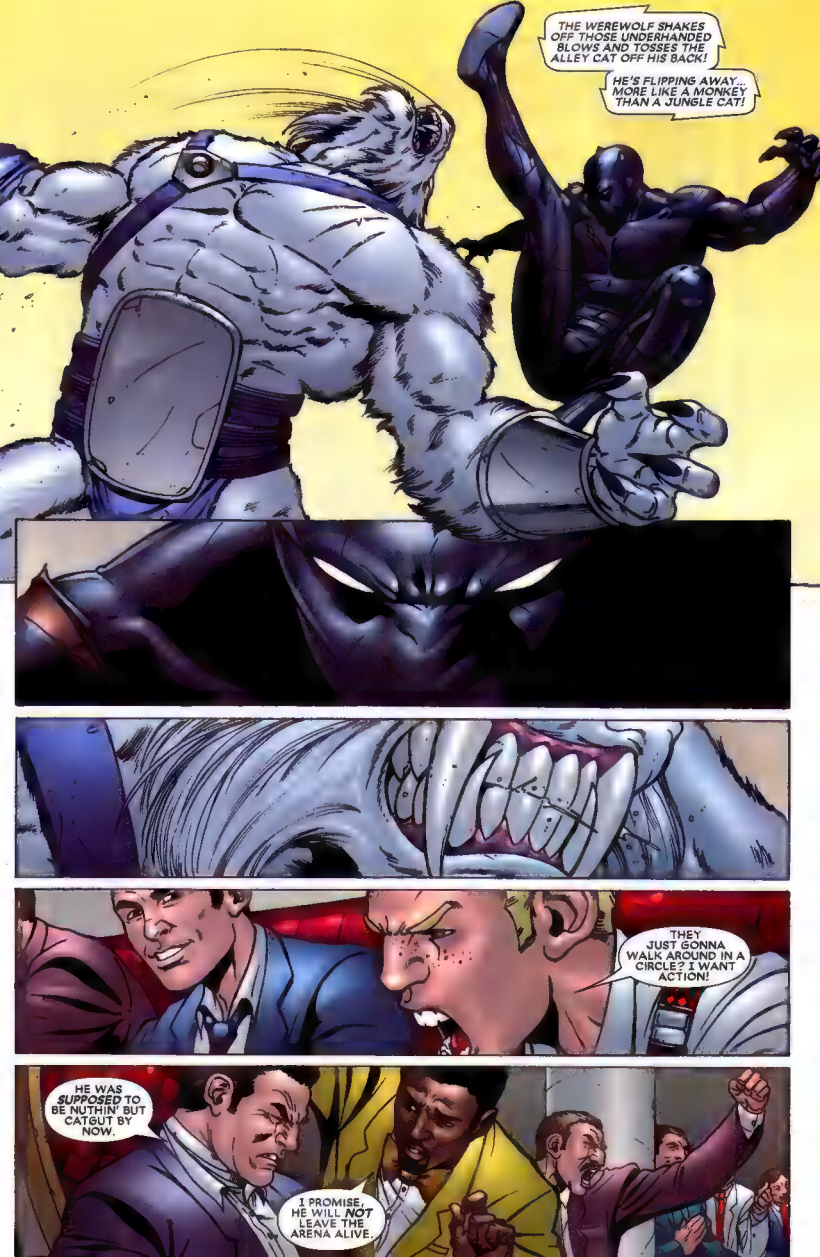
THAAAAAA WINNNAAAA... BY KNOCKOUT-- THE HUMAAAAN TORCH!
GOOD JOB, JOHNNY.
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO WHEN IT'S YOUR TURN?
BUMPY JOHNSON IS THE NAME.
AND WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?
AND WHO DO YOU WORK FOR, BUMPY?
I AM MY OWN MAN.
A LOTTA EMPLOYEES SAY THAT.
THE QUESTION IS, WHAT [redacted] YOU GONNA DO? LAST TIME YOU WERE HERE, YOU STARTED A REVOLUTION.
A LOTTA GOOD THAT DID. HERE WE ARE, BACK AGAIN.
THANGS DONE CHANGED, ROCKY, DON'T GET IT TWISTED. LOTTA MOVING PARTS. BEEN WAITING ON AN X ELEMENT LIKE YOU TO SHAKE THINGS UP. MAKE SOME OPPORTUNITIES.
AND THEN WHAT HAPPENS? YOU CLEAN THE PLACE UP? OR IT STARTS ALL OVER AGAIN WITH YOU AS THE BIG BOSS?
DOES IT MATTER? YOU'RE GONNA DO WHAT YOU'RE GONNA DO. AND THEN I'M GONNA DO WHAT I'M GONNA DO.
SO MY JOB ISN'T DONE TILL I TAKE YOU DOWN LIKE THE REST OF THEM.
I'M YOUR FRIEND, ORANGE SLICE. YOU'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH.

YOU ARE ON THE SKRULL PLANET KRAL, MANY YEARS AGO, KRAL PATTERNED ITSELF AFTER A MAN NAMED "MACHINE GUN" MARTIN— A GANGSTER AND MURDERER. IT WAS MARTIN WHO FIRST GAVE THE IDEA TO SETTLE OUR DISPUTES BY PITTING GLADIATORS AGAINST ONE ANOTHER IN THE ARENA.
AFTER THE GLADIATOR REVOLT INSPIRED BY YOUR FRIEND BEN, WE BARELY SURVIVED AS A PEOPLE. SOME OF THE LIBERATED GLADIATORS WANTED TO WIPE US OUT ALTOGETHER FOR OUR CRIMES.
"BUT THEY WANTED TO GO HOME TO THEIR LOVED ONES, SO AFTER KILLING THE LEADERS OF THE OLD SOCIETY, THEY LEFT.
"THE SURVIVORS LEFT RUINS, WITH PROFOUND IDENTITY CRISIS.
"SOME, LIKE BIGGIE, IMMEDIATELY WANTED TO THE WORLD THAT WAS LOST AND START ALL OVER AGAIN, ONLY BIGGER AND STRONGER.
"BUT OTHERS FELT GUILTY ABOUT WHAT WE HAD DONE, AND WANTED TO CHANGE. BUT TO WHAT? OUR SKRULL IDENTITIES AND TO US. SO LOOKED TO EARTH AGAIN FOR INSPIRATION.
"WE SAW A VERY WORLD THAN THE ONE TAUGHT TO US DECADES AGO. THERE WAS A MOVEMENT THAT EMPHASIZED MORALITY AND SELF-WORTH.
"WE WERE INSPIRED TO MODEL OUR LIVES AFTER THEM."

UH... AMAZING. SO YOU BECAME TWO RIVAL CULTURES? UPTOWN AND DOWNTOWN?
WE HAVE TRIED TO OPEN THEIR MINDS-- IN A NON-VIOLENT FASHION, OF COURSE. THEY CONTINUE TO SEE OUR EXISTENCE AS A THREAT--
BECAUSE OF ME!
IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY BLACK PANTHERS PROTECTING HARLEM, THOSE THUGS WOULD HAVE OVERRUN HARLEM AGES AGO!
BLACK PANTHERS?
YES...I HAVE ASSEMBLED AN ARMY OF YOUNG BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO ARE [redacted] TO DEFEND OUR HOMELAND BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY!
SISTER, YOUR POWERS ARE THE TALK OF THE ENTIRE PLANET. WITH YOUR HELP, WE CAN [redacted] THE SLAVERY, THE DEGRADATION AND HUMILIATION OF BEINGS FROM ACROSS THE GALAXY THAT HAPPENS EVERY DAY DOWNTOWN!
MALCOLM, I RESPECT YOUR PASSION FOR JUSTICE. BUT THIS YOUNG LADY JUST ARRIVED HERE. [redacted] CAN BE A POWERFUL SYMBOL FOR GOOD-- AND MORE; BUT STARTING A WAR THAT WE CANNOT WIN [redacted] NOT THE ANSWER! NOT WHEN WE HAVE A MORE POWERFUL WEAPON THAN GUNS.
ALL YOUR ATTEMPTS TO CONQUER THEM WITH LOVE HAVE FAILED. THEY HAD THEIR CHANCE, NOW IT'S MY TURN.
IF WE DON'T ACT NOW, THEY WILL EXECUTE THE SYMBOL OF [redacted] MOVEMENT IN THE ARENA TO DEMORALIZE OUR PEOPLE.
YOU MEAN MY HUSBAND?!

AND NOW FOR THE LAST FIGHT OF THE DAY. SURELY YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT THE PATHETIC BAND OF TROUBLEMAKERS FROM UPTOWN?
WELL, THEY'VE ELECTED A CHAMPION TO CHALLENGE ALL COMERS IN THE ARENA TO PROVE THEIR INHERENT SUPERIORITY.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...THE BLACK PANTHER!
AND FROM THE DOG STAR SYSTEM--THE WEREWOLF OF SIRIUS!
LOOKS LIKE THEY CUT ALL THE TECH OUTTA T'CHARLIE'S LONG JOHNS. I GUESS THEY CALL THAT FAIR AROUND HERE.

THE WEREWOLF LEAPS...BUT SO DOES THE PANTHER, IN AN AMAZING VERTICAL!
OH, THERE'S SOME DENTAL WORK NEEDED!
DON'T KNOW IF THAT SPINAL PUNCH WILL AFFECT HIM, BUT THAT KIDNEY PUNCH HAS GOTTA HURT!
A LITTLE LESS GLOWING WITH THE PLAY-BY-PLAY, CAPISCE?
G-G-G-G-GOT IT!


THE WEREWOLF SHAKES OFF THOSE UNDERHANDED BLOWS AND TOSSES THE ALLEY CAT OFF HIS BACK!
HE'S FLIPPING AWAY... MORE LIKE A MONKEY THAN A JUNGLE CAT!
THEY JUST GONNA WALK AROUND IN A CIRCLE? I WANT ACTION!
HE WAS *SUPPOSED* TO BE NUTHIN' BUT CATGUT BY NOW.
I PROMISE, HE WILL *NOT* LEAVE THE ARENA ALIVE.

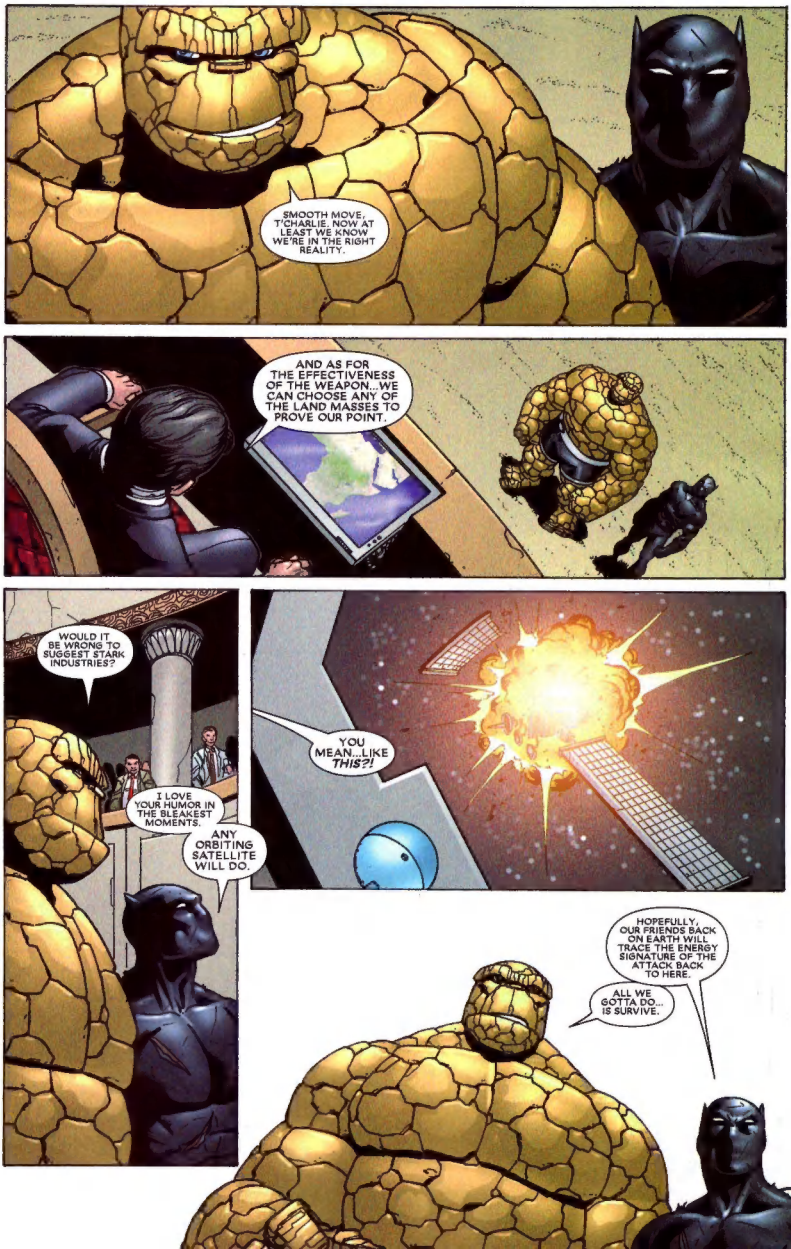
NOW IS THE TIME, BROTHERS AND SISTERS! OUR BODIES ARE TRAINED FOR BATTLE. OUR MINDS ARE READY FOR REVOLUTION, AND AN AFRICAN GODDESS HAS ARRIVED TO LEAD US INTO BATTLE!
DO YOU HAVE ANY WORDS OF INSPIRATION TO SAY TO THE TROOPS?
I... AH...
I FEEL VERY UNCOMFORTABLE GOING INTO BATTLE WITH PEOPLE-- HOWEVER WELL-INTENTIONED-- THAT I DON'T KNOW AND HAVE NOT TRAINED WITH.
MY POWERS COULD VERY WELL INJURE YOU UNINTENTIONALLY, SO PLEASE STAND CLEAR OF ME.
OH, AND IF THERE ARE ANY TRAITORS IN THIS ROOM... I WILL KILL YOU PERSONALLY.
NICE...
NEVER HURTS TO SET A TONE...
I WANT YOU TO MEET THE DOUBLE AGENT THAT WILL SMUGGLE [redacted] INTO THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN TO LAUNCH OUR ATTACK.
THIS... IS BUMPY JOHNSON.

ANNNNND... THE WOLF ATTACKS!
LOOKS LIKE THE PANTHER IS PARALYZED WITH FEAR!
OOOOOOOOH!

KRAAAK
UH... MAYBE NOT.
DID YOU HEAR THAT? YOUR MAN *WON!*
OF *COURSE* HE DID. BUT NOW THEY *REALLY* HAVE TO KILL HIM. LET'S HURRY.
SISTER, I KNOW YOU HAVE TO STAND BY YOUR MAN. BUT DO YOU SEE THAT VIOLENCE ONLY BEGETS MORE VIOLENCE?
REVEREND, WHEN THIS IS OVER, YOU WILL RULE THIS LAND WITH WISDOM AND LOVE.
BUT RIGHT NOW...
IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME.

LOOK AT 'EM. NOW HE'S GOT THE CROWD ON HIS SIDE, AND YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW THEY'RE CELEBRATIN' UP IN HARLEM.
THIS AIN'T A GOOD LOOK FOR BIGGIE....NOT AT ALL.
ONCE OUR BOY BUMPY LEADS THE SPOOKS TO AN UPRISING, NOBODY WILL THINK TWICE WHEN I PUSH HIM OFF HIS PEDESTAL AND TAKE THE THRONE.
ESPECIALLY AFTER YOU SAVE THE CITY FROM THE MOOLIE INVASION!
HE'S MAKING ME LOOK LIKE A FOOL! I'LL KILL HIM MYSELF.
YOU CAN'T, BOSS. HE'S TOO POPULAR RIGHT NOW. IT'S GOTTA BE DONE IN THE RING. THE RIGHT WAY.
YOU GOT ONE MORE ROUND TO MAKE IT RIGHT. THEN I'LL KILL YOU BEFORE I KILL HIM.
BRING OUT THE NEXT OPPONENT!
ONE OF THE FIERCEST AND MOST HATED FIGHTERS TO EVER GRACE THE ARENA, AFTER DESTROYING OUR WAY OF LIFE, FATE HAS RETURNED HIM TO US SO HE CAN FINALLY MEET HIS LONG OVERDUE DESTINY!

BOOOOOO
BAD DAY AT THE OFFICE?
I'M STILL STANDING.
HEARD THAT.
YOU KNOW WE AIN'T FIGHTING EACH OTHER, RIGHT?
IN FACT, YOU SHOULD SURRENDER NOW.
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE PLANET-SMASHER? WE WILL DESTROY YOUR WHOLE WORLD IF YOU DON'T FIGHT!
WE DESTROYED THAT THING LAST TIME WE WERE HERE. HOW DO WE KNOW THAT'S NOT A FAKE?
AND HOW DO WE KNOW THAT'S EVEN EARTH IT'S POINTED AT?
AS YOU CAN SEE, IT'S YOUR WORLD IN DANGER.


SMOOTH MOVE, T'CHARLIE. NOW AT LEAST WE KNOW WE'RE IN THE RIGHT REALITY.
AND AS FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WEAPON...WE CAN CHOOSE ANY OF THE LAND MASSES TO PROVE OUR POINT.
WOULD IT BE WRONG TO SUGGEST STARK INDUSTRIES?
I LOVE YOUR HUMOR IN THE BLEAKEST MOMENTS.
ANY ORBITING SATELLITE WILL DO.
YOU MEAN...LIKE THIS?!
HOPEFULLY, OUR FRIENDS BACK ON EARTH WILL TRACE THE ENERGY SIGNATURE OF THE ATTACK BACK TO HERE.
ALL WE GOTTA DO... IS SURVIVE.

TO BE CONCLUDED

WITH TEAMWORK
ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE....

FSE

DCP

THIS FSE SCAN FROM DCP WAS SCANNED AND EDITED IN SECRET!

WE'RE NOT GOING TO SAY WHO WE ARE, BECAUSE IT'S NOT REALLY IMPORTANT.
THE IMPORTANT PART HERE IS THAT YOU HAVE A NICE DCP SCAN ON YOUR SCREEN.
<- LIKE IT? [-] BUY IT! ->